Unconditional Talks with Pakistan

259. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether after the recent announcement by the Prime Minister on 29th October, 2003 proposing various measures to settle the Kashmir issue, Pakistan has accepted on the condition that India includes Kashmir for meaningful dialogue;

(b) if so, whether the objection raised by the Pakistan has no relevance as it is purely an internal matter of India;

(c) whether no talks will be resumed with Pakistan unless and until they are unconditional; and

(d) if so, what is the progress so far made in regard to implementation of these proposals?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH): (a) to (d) In continuation of Prime Minister's initiative of April 18, and as a part of the step-by-step approach to normalize relations with Pakistan, India, on 22 October 2003, announced a series of steps to further promote people to people contacts between the two countries.

Pakistan's initial response on 29 October 2003 was inadequate. While welcoming some of the proposals, like allowing senior citizens to cross Wagah on foot; establishing links between Indian Coast Guards and Pakistan Maritime Security Agency; and resumption of bilateral sporting contacts, Pakistan opted to politicize the humanitarian gestures and attached impractical, extraneous and delaying conditions to others.

However, on 23 November 2003, Prime Minister of Pakistan responded positively to the Indian proposals of 22nd October, and agreed to a number of measures. He also announced that Pakistan armed forces along the Line of Control (LoC) have been issued instructions to ceasefire along the LoC with effect from Eid-al-Fitr. Subsequently, the Director General Military Operations (DGMOs) of the two

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

countries agreed to observe ceasefire on the International Border, LoC and Actual Ground Position Line (AGPL) in Jammu and Kashmir with effect from the midnight of November 25, 2003.

India is committed to resolve all outstanding issues with Pakistan bilaterally and peacefully in accordance with the Simla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration. There is an agreed framework of the Composite Dialogue on different issues, including Jammu and Kashmir. However, conducive atmosphere for a sustained dialogue necessarily requires an end to cross border terrorism, and dismantling of the infrastructure of support to terrorism in Pakistan.

Conservation of Hindu Culture of Indonesia

†260. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Governor of Bali had requested our Prime Minister to save Hindu culture of Indonesia during the latter's trip to Indonesia;

(b) if so, action taken by Government in this regard; and

(c) if no action has been taken, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) Does not arise.

Facilities to the Haj Pilgrims

261. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) what plan has been drawn for providing better facilities to the Haj Pilgrims for the year 2004; and

(b) whether the Ministry was consulted before changing the subsidy norms and rules and regulations for the Haj Pilgrims this year?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIIRS (SHRI VINOD KHANNA): (a) Government has continued its endeavour to improve and enhance facilities for Indian Pilgrims. A high level Government delegation led by MOS(EA) had detailed